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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC PHUM KMDR KPAO CI

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - PRESS FREEDOM

¶1. On February 8, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000) carried a column by international consultant Juan Enrique Froemel entitled, "Cartoons, Mohamed, and Violence." Quote:

"Europeans . . . insist on upholding freedom of expression, forgetting the right of those who are adherents of Islam to exercise their religion with dignity. A banner carried by a Muslim in a demonstration in London that was aired on television said 'to hell with democracy' caught my eye. It could represent the worst effect of this crisis. For many in the region (the Middle East) it is impossible to understand how the West, which proclaims as a democratic value that the right of one individual ends where the right of the other begins, can justify this lack of respect for Muslim beliefs. The West must be careful, because this is not an academic discussion. This discussion affects real people and could have very real and serious consequences."

KELLY